



NEWS RELEASE

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American Imam Visits Zamboanga

Imam Talal Y. Eid, Commissioner, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and Founder and Director of the Islamic Institute of Boston, visited Zamboanga on February 12. Imam Eid is visiting the Philippines as part of a U.S. Embassy speaker program that promotes mutual understanding between people of different countries and faiths.

During his one-day visit to Zamboanga, Imam Eid addressed nearly 400 students, faculty members, and media representatives on the "Role of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom" and "Interreligious Dialogue as an Instrument of Conflict Resolution" at the Western Mindanao State University, and more than 200 students at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University.

Imam Eid pointed out in his presentation numerous examples of religious tolerance in the Koran and encouraged people of all faiths to come together to address social problems and work together for solutions to alleviate poverty and address drug addiction and trafficking, armed conflict, and other world problems.

"I am so glad the U.S. Imam came here today and spoke of promoting peace. I was so inspired by him and hope to be like him one day and do what he is doing in cities and communities. I think this presentation will encourage others to engage in inter-faith dialogue more," said Zen Johan, president-elect of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University student council.

During his stay in Zamboanga, Imam Eid also participated in Friday prayers with more than 500 people at the Santa Barbara mosque, met with local religious and community leaders, and held discussions with peace advocates and human rights activists.

Imam Eid is a Muslim scholar, activist, and lecturer on Islam and speaks about inter-faith relations in North America. He is the first appointed chaplain at Brandeis University and at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and has been featured on multiple local and national radio and television programs in the United States. He also serves as a marital and family therapist and is recognized as a leading scholar on Islamic law.

After his visit to Zamboanga, Imam Eid traveled to Cotabato and Marawi to address students and faculty at Notre Dame University and Mindanao State University and met with youth and religious leaders in the area.

“People can be whatever we want as long as we understand the concept of religion, which is to bring happiness into our lives. Not to bring misery. Life is full of choices and all of us should have freedom to choose different faiths,” Imam Eid said.

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